



# NEWS RELEASE

## VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

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### **SOYBEANS, COTTON, PEANUTS AND HAY ACREAGE UP; CORN, BARLEY AND WHEAT ACREAGE DOWN**

Virginia's soybean producers have increased their acreage this year to 510,000 acres, according to the results of a survey conducted March 1 by the Virginia Agricultural Statistics Service. This amounts to a 2 percent increase from the 2003 crop year. Cotton producers intend to plant 90,000 acres, which is 1,000 acres above last year. Acreage intended for peanuts is expected to increase by 1,000 acres to 35,000. Hay acreage intentions are up 110,000 acres to 1,390,000.

Corn producers intend to reduce acreage in 2004 to 440,000, this is 30,000 acres or 6 percent below last year's planted acres. Barley acreage seeded last fall for all uses was 50,000 acres, down 25,000 acres from last year. Winter wheat producers have decreased their acreage this year to 180,000 acres. This is 14 percent below last year's planted acres.

Tobacco acreage intentions devoted to flue, burley and dark fired will be up in 2004. Producers expect to harvest 23,000 flue-cured tobacco acres in 2004, a 21 percent increase from 2003. Fire-cured tobacco producers intend to harvest 700 acres which is 50 acres above last year. Burley producers intend to harvest 7,000 acres this year which is 500 acres above the 2003 estimate. Sun-cured acreage intentions remained unchanged from last year at 70 acres.

Planting of major row crops is just in the beginning or in the planning stages, therefore producers could change their plans as the planting season progresses.

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Corn Planted Acreage Up Fractionally from 2003

**Soybean Acreage Up 3 Percent**  
**All Wheat Acreage Down 4 Percent**  
**All Cotton Acreage Up 7 Percent**

U.S. **corn** planted area for all purposes is estimated at 79.0 million acres, up fractionally from both 2002 and 2003. Expected acreage is up from last year throughout much of the Corn Belt as growers are hoping to take advantage of higher corn prices. However, most States in the Southeast and southern Great Plains are intending to decrease their corn plantings as producers are switching to soybeans and cotton due to more favorable prices relative to corn.

**Soybean** growers in the U.S. intend to plant an estimated 75.4 million acres, up 3 percent from last year. If realized, this will be the largest planted area on record and a rebound from the three year decline in acreage. Growers in all States, except South Dakota and Wisconsin, intend to plant more than or at least as many acres of soybeans as last year. Current high prices are encouraging many producers to plant more soybeans, with the largest acreage increases expected in North Dakota, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Minnesota.

All U.S. **wheat** planted area is expected to total 59.5 million acres in 2004, down 4 percent from 2003. Winter wheat planted area for the 2004 crop is 43.4 million acres, down 3 percent from 2003. Of the total, about 30.9 million acres are Hard Red Winter, 8.3 million acres are Soft Red Winter, and 4.2 million acres are White Winter.

All U.S. **cotton** plantings for 2004 are expected to total 14.4 million acres, 7 percent above last year. Upland acreage is expected to total 14.2 million acres, also a 7 percent increase. All States are expecting more acreage than last year except for North Carolina and Mississippi.

U.S. **peanut** producers intend to plant 1.37 million acres of peanuts in 2004, up 2 percent from last year. Of the nine producing States, six intend to plant more acres than in 2003. Southeast growers (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina) intend to plant 933,000 acres, up 6 percent from last year. In the Virginia-North Carolina region, producers intend to plant 137,000 acres, up 1 percent from 2003. Growers in the Southwest (New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas) intend to plant 296,000 acres, 10 percent below 2003.

U. S. **barley** growers intend to plant 4.68 million acres for 2004, down 12 percent from last year.

Producers of **hay** in the U.S expect to harvest 63.7 million acres of all hay in 2004, up 1 percent from last year.

U.S. all **tobacco** area for harvest in 2004 is expected to be 414,550 acres, down less than 1 percent from 2003 and 3 percent below two years ago. Flue-cured tobacco, at 231,200 acres, is 1 percent below a year ago. Flue-cured acreage accounts for 56 percent of this year's expected total tobacco acreage. Burley tobacco, at 157,200 acres, is up 1 percent from a year ago but 1 percent below two years ago. Area in 5 burley producing States is expected to increase from last year. These States are Kentucky, Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, and West Virginia which are up 1 percent, 8 percent, 9 percent, 2 percent, and 8 percent, respectively.

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